Dear Jerry, 11/11/88

In Don DeLillo's puffery for his "Libra" he told the Washington Post that he got the idea for this book in reading the Warren Commission pages, that the characters just jumped off those pages. I've struggled through more than the first third and Libra doesn't even use the actual characters of the Commission's records, published and unpublished. It is, rather, a mishmash of the nutty theories that swirled around Garrison and his claque of idle theorists.

As I recall the lengthy Post interview, DeLillo says that like all Americans he has a clear recollection of where he was when he heard JFK had been killed and when it was. In fact, he's the only person of whom I've even heard who does not know this. He told the Post he was in his bank that morning. The assassination was in the afternoon in New York, not the morning.

What I am saying is that there is nothing true about this book or the crap used to promote it. It is a successful ripoff formula, correctly estimating that the time for such a formaula had come and that it would be well received by reviewers.

The tuth is that DeLillo doesn't know even the basic information in the Commission's records although he claims it all came from there. He likewise doesn't know much about a central part of his concoction, Oswald in NewOrleans/544 Camp St.

At the very beginning, he did not know what is conspicuous in the Commission's stuff, Oswald's favorite TV program. On page 5 he has the wrong ones and does no mention Oswald's favorite, Philbrick's "I Led Three Lives."

On page 15 he gives as the purpose of the CIA's secret history of the assassination following "the bullet trajectory backwards." This is silly. Such a project is not an intelligence study and it is, moreover, in the absence of more than a single point, impossible. You can project anywhere from but a single point. What I'm saying in this is that DeLillo didn't even take time to think. He has a hasty ripoff/puton.

DeLillo just makes it up as he goes, merely using the names used by Garrison and others, without regard to actualities. Or, not as he says he worked and wrote. He is all wrong on Ferrie's illness, which he never describes. Ferrie was recovering from alopaecia (phon) when he decided to self-medicate. Contrary to what DeLillo says (42) about Ferrie being Oswald's commander in the Civil Air Patrol, Ferrie then was officially separated from the CAP.

To page 61: this stupidity of a deliberately missed assassination of JFK is stolen from Hugh McDonald's fake, "Appointment In Dallas." (In fact much of what I've gone through is cribbed from the French SDECE fake retitled by Garrison from "L'Amerique Brule" to "Farewell America.") It is utter nonsense to visualize any intelligence agency believing that it is possible to score a deliberate near miss in what always

has very many people around it, a presidential motorcade. Aside from the nuttiness of the whole idea, of scaring JFK into following the CIA's line and making it look like Castro did it to inspire more vigorous efforts against him.

I think that DeLillo may have seen the commercial possibilities of the kind of false pretense that makes this bad book a success years ago when he was preparing a piece for I think Rolling Stone. He then got to be familiar with all the nut stuff he uses in the book and that seems to be as far as he went in research for it. He is quite wrong about characterizations of such people as DeMohrenschildt and Guy Banister and his secretary Delphine Roberts springing from the Commission's stuff but all of this, even in the detail as used, comes from the Garrison gang's wild imaginings and nothing else. Some (about 57) comes from Penn Jones and Mark Lane.

DeLillo hasn't even bothered to learn about the building at 544 Camp St., which grew into a major part of his story he represents comes from only actuality. He is quite wrong about Banister's office being on the second floor and about Bainster using the side door not to get gunned down at the front door. His office was on the first floor and it had its own entrance from the street, Lafayette St. The main front door at the time written about was not bricked over, which DeL. says. It was entirely open and I used it even after the time in question. In even the detail about the alleged Oswald "office" in that building, the one formerly used by the Cuban Revolutionary Council that from his vast knowkedge of the Commission's information DeL somehow forgot to go into he is ignorant and wrong, having it on the floor above Banister's or the third floor. It was not a single small room, not a "broom closet" but it was a pair of good-sized rooms, one quite large.

None of this would have any real significance were it not for DeLillo's own lies about his own book. Without these lies it would merely be a poor job, rather amateurish. But with them it becomes quite dishonest because of the falsehoods he invented and exploited to launch a book that would rip the national mind off while it was robbing the pocket.

Having gone this far without seeing anything at all good in this book I see no point in going farthur. I'm sure that were I to I'd find other junk of the past he's cribbed and lied about.